POLITICAL SPHERE

Elites and informal politics **№13/2009**

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History of ideas

Iryna Micheeva. "Kryvija" and "Zadruga" as Cultural and Political Prospects of National Renascence Projects in Belarus and Poland: an Attempt at Comparative Analysis

The article deals with a comparative analysis of philosophical and political projects of Belarusian (Vaclau Lastouski) and Polish (Jan Stachniuk) national renascence. Based on theoretical reconstruction of problem and content fields of both concepts – "Kryvich Renascence" and "Slavic Pan-Humanism" – the article reveals similarities and differences in the authors' interpretations of the essence of national culture, specifics of its development stages, prospects for realization of historic mission of the Belarusian and Polish peoples.

Keywords: National and Cultural Renascence, Ethnonational Identity, Belarusian Nationalism, Panslavism, Neopaganism.

Elites and informal politics

Natallia Vasilevich. Studying Belarusian Elites: Between Algebra and Geography

The article analyses situation with studying Belarusian political elite since late 1980s. Main authors and texts, logic, methodology and strategy of analyzing the elite as an element of Belarusian political system are being considered. Special attention is paid to consideration of conclusions made by particular authors as well as genre variety of the texts.

Keywords: Political Elite, Belarusian Political Elite, Belarusian Politics, Belarusian Political Science.

Iryna Shulenkova. Contemporary Populist Regimes: Comparative Analysis of Belarus and Venezuela

This article presents comparative analysis of political regimes of Hugo Chavez and Alexander Lukashenko. These regimes are analysed through the prism of the theory of populism as a political strategy. According to the theory, populism is characterised by the charismatic personalistic leadership, undermining of mediating political institutions, nationalistic economy and redistributive policies via different social programs. Regardless the fact that these regimes appeared in very different countries and in different parts of the world they are very similar and represent examples of the classical models of populism as a political strategy.

Keywords: Populism, Charismatic Leader, Nationalistic Economy, Income Redistribution, Chavez, Lukashenka.

Jauhien Fursiejeu. Government Program "Electronic Belarus": Electronic Democracy and Strategies of Ruling Elite

The article deals with the problem of using information technologies in interactions between citizens and government organs and agencies in Belarus, as well as opportunities and challenges for citizens related to implementation of the Government Program "Electronic Belarus" (2003–2010). Based on the materials of case studies conducted on Region Executive Committees sites the study concludes that the process of developing and taking decisions in Belarus remains unavailable to the citizens. System of on-line interaction between citizens and government does not require consultations nor other mechanisms of initiating public communication. There are reasons to state that conditions for active participation of citizens in setting agenda and political decision-making are inadequate.

Keywords: "Electronic Belarus", Electronic Democracy, Political Civic Participation, E-Government.

Siarhei Bohdan. Iranian Political Elites in 1997-2009: Structuring Political Field of the Second Islamic Republic

The article deals with major groupings of the Iranian political elites in 1997–2009 as well as their organizational structures. It analyses interaction and influence of the major political forces including reformist movement on the state system. A scheme of structuring Iranian political field in these years is set forth. Structural reasons for rise and decline of two most influential Iranian political groupings in this period – i.e. reformists and neo-conservatives are analyzed.

Keywords: Iranian politics, Islamic republic, elites, Iranian political parties, reformist movement in Iran, Mohammad Khatami, Mahmud Ahmadinejad.

Alexander Filipau. Political Elite Consolidation Mechanism: Syrian Case

The article considers the mechanism of Syrian political elite consolidation. The specific feature of this process is the heterogeneity of Syrian society as well as dominating of religious minorities members in the government and Ba'ath party. Special attention is given to party's ideology role. Based on the works of party's ideologist M.'Aflaq the main ideological concepts (nationalism, socialism, religion, the eternal Arab Revelation, revolution, Arabism) and their role in Syrian political elite consolidation are revealed.

Keywords: political elite, ideology, Ba'ath party, M.'Aflaq, Syrian politics.

Public policy

Anastasiya Belkova. Students in Public Policy Field: Good Intentions, Undelivered Hopes?

The article analyzes the process of integrating youth in Ulan-Ude in the field of urban public policy, designing a new youth political elite. The author considers the institutions (associations) involved in the recruitment of students into power, which young people can claim the young politician status, what resources are needed to enter politics and what resources a student eventually gets access to, what positions a student can pretend to in the field of urban (Republican) policies. In the final part of the article the author argues whether young people who identify themselves with youth political elite, have the opportunity to convert already obtained resources in the political capital and to establish themselves firmly in the politics.

Keywords: Public Policy, Social Inclusion, Habitus, Youth Policy.

Reviews

Andrei Jahorau. Unsystematic Introduction to Political Systems Theory

The article presents an critical review of the "Political Systems Theory" textbook by Nina Antanovich. It emphasizes that regardless an ambitious claim to summarize theoretical ground of system approach in political science, the textbook does not achieve this aim. The text has some explicit flaws: it is eclectic, contradicts itself, is overfilled with quotations and interpretations, is methodologically undetermined, contains factual mistakes etc. The very fact of publishing such a textbook is an alarming sign of crisis in today's Belarusian official political science.

Key words: General System Theory, System Analysis, Political System, Political Science in Belarus.

Dzianis Melyantsou. Attempt at Comprehensive Description of Relations between Belarus and Moldova

The article reviews the final text of study on Belarusian-Moldavian relations carried out as part of the State Research Program for 2006-2010 "History of Belarusian Nation, Statehood and Culture". It concludes that although the publication is not a scientific paper and does not conform to scientific study criteria, it undoubtedly will be interesting for readers who want to learn about the history of Moldova and get initial information on bilateral relations between Belarus and Moldova.

Key words: Moldova, Belarus, History, International Relations, Eastern Europe.